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A VISIT TO THE DOCTORS MAYO, ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL, ROCHESTER, MINNESOTA *

By WILLIAM L. CONKLIN, M.D.

ROCHESTER, Minnesota, is a thriving town of about 6000 inhabitants. It is sometimes jokingly spoken of as "Mayotown" and there can be no doubt that the Mayo brothers have made the town famous and that much of the unusual business activity, for a town of that size, is due to the fact that many thousands of patients and doctors from all over the country come there every year—the patients to avail themselves of the skill of two of the greatest surgeons this big country has ever produced, and the doctors to see for themselves some of the work which has made these men famous, and about which nearly every doctor in this country and in Europe has read more or less. The situation in this western town is, in many respects, without a parallel, in this or any other country.

Nowhere else in so small a town is there a hospital in which so many operations are done in a year. Nowhere else, so far as I know, are there two surgeons in a town of that size who have become so widely known for their vast experience, great success, and for the pioneer work they have done in their profession. I might add that nowhere else, so far as I know, are there two surgeons who are not teachers in a medical college, yet who have the daily compliment paid them and their work of a visit of from twenty to thirty doctors from all over the country. It is hard, perhaps impossible, to fully account for the remarkable growth and success of the Mayo brothers' work. No doubt it is due in some degree to the fact that their father, now eighty years old, was a surgeon before them, and that they grew up in and with the great western country, with surgical cases increasing in number more rapidly than did competent surgeons to care for them.

But the men themselves are the great cause of their success. They are strong men—strong in brain and brawn—and indefatigable workers. Added to these traits, they possess to an unusual degree the simplicity of manner which belongs to and is one of the evidences of true greatness. They talk to the doctors about them in an easy, friendly way, always ready, even anxious, to impart knowledge, but never showing

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egotism or assuming superiority. In watching them operate, one is impressed with their evident honesty and the conscientious and painstaking character of all their work, never operating to the gallery, but always with the patient's best good as the supreme object of attainment. Their work is practically all done at St. Mary's Hospital, which is pleasantly situated just out of the town, and is conducted by the Sisters of Charity. A large addition is now being built.

The two operating rooms are on the top floor and are well lighted. In one corner of each room a sort of scaffolding or framework of gas pipe is built, onto which the twenty or thirty visiting doctors climb. The arrangement is such as to utilize the available room to the best advantage, but standing or sitting on gas pipe would become tiresome if there were not so much of interest to see. No one thinks of complaining, however, unless the man in front of him forgets and obscures his vision by standing up. The identity of the patients is absolutely unknown to those who witness the operations.

From eight in the morning till one, or about that, operations follow each other in quick succession. The aim is to begin the anæsthetic in one room while an operation is in progress in the other, but quite often both brothers are operating at the same time.

A pleasant room is provided for the doctors to wait in during the occasional intervals between operations. In this room is found a list of the operations for the day.

Graduate nurses, as well as physicians, are admitted to the operating rooms, but all other persons are excluded.

One of the unique features of the work at Rochester is the Surgeon's Club. All doctors who visit the clinic are expected to become members of this club. It meets every afternoon, in a pleasant room down town, and discusses for about two hours the work of the morning. Its officers are elected every week and include three censors whose duty it is to see that newcomers are eligible to membership and that they register and comply with the rules in and about the operating rooms.

A reporter is appointed for each operating room each day. They give a more or less detailed account of every operation and then discussion follows and questions are asked. In this work of the Surgeon's Club, as in all the work of the operating room and hospital, everything is done in a very systematic way and much more is accomplished than would otherwise be possible.

On the lower floor of the building in which the Surgeon's Club meets are the offices of the Drs. Mayo, and their partner, Dr. Graham, who has charge of all medical examinations and is one of the visiting

physicians of St. Mary's Hospital. There is a large corps of assistants, including specialists in almost every branch of medicine. This office is open all day and the Mayo brothers are there during all or a part of the afternoon.

I am told that there is an average of seventy-four new patients each day. One day during my visit there were one hundred and ten patients and their friends in the waiting room or large hall which is used for that purpose, beside those who were then in the various private offices. Most of the cases which come there from out of town are surgical in character, and the patients are given a thorough examination by the assistant surgeons before they are seen by the Mayos. Here, again, is evident the careful attention to detail and system which has much to do with the success and extent of the work accomplished.

During the five days I was at the hospital there were one hundred and ten patients operated on. Occasionally it would be found necessary to do two operations on one patient,—*e. g.*, the operation for gall-stones and an appendectomy—so that the number of operations actually done was somewhat more than one hundred and ten. On the busiest day there were thirty patients on the list.

Some of these operations are done by Dr. Judd, who assists Dr. Charles Mayo, or "Charlie" as he is often called. Dr. Judd is a very skilful operator and when the addition to the hospital is completed he is to have an operating room of his own.

Dr. William Mayo, who is the elder of the brothers, has as his chief assistant Sister Joseph, who is at the head of the hospital. She has filled this position for many years and in addition to what must have been a natural adaptation to the work, she has acquired, as the result of her many years of experience and thorough acquaintance with the methods and requirements of the great surgeons, a dexterity and knowledge which are truly wonderful. Indeed her help is so efficient that the doctor seems almost to be working with four hands instead of two. So familiar is she with every step of every operation, so far as the routine work goes, that the operator's wants are known as by intuition. Of course no two cases are exactly alike and emergencies frequently arise, but Dr. Mayo's brain is at work and directs both pairs of hands.

There are two other assistants in Dr. William's room and two, beside Dr. Judd, in Dr. Charles' room. Each has his or her appointed task, and so thorough is their knowledge of these tasks, so perfectly systematized is the work, that an occasional word or gesture from the operator is all that is necessary—indeed their wants are often recognized and supplied before they can make them known.

During the five days of arduous work I did not hear a single impatient word or see the least evidence of that which is sometimes noticed, but very undesirable in the operating room—hurry. These things which I did not see, as well as those which I did see, impressed me with the greatness and goodness of the men.

I will not go into detail in regard to the work done at St. Mary's Hospital, but will mention two or three operations which are indicative of the wonderful progress which is being made in surgery as well as in medicine and sanitary science at the present day. In these operations, which are being done almost daily by the Mayos, they have acquired special skill and are acknowledged authorities in questions pertaining to technic.

Dr. William Mayo has been very successful in the operation called gastro-enterostomy, which is done for the relief of obstruction at the lower or pyloric end of the stomach—usually due to malignant growth. In favorable cases the growth itself is removed together with a portion of the stomach and the results secured have been surprisingly good. In such cases the operation not only relieves suffering but is as well distinctly life-saving in character.

Dr. Mayo has also acquired remarkable skill in the operation for gall-stones and for the relief of the many surgical conditions to which the gall-bladder is subject. In 1907 he tabulated conclusions based on 2200 operations on this class of cases. But these are only illustrations of the many operations to which he has given years of thought and study and in which he has acquired unusual skill. I know of no better proof of this skill and of no more cheering fact in the annals of modern surgery than appear in the statement that in a series of 400 gastro-enterostomies, with removal of a part of the stomach, by Dr. William Mayo, the mortality was less than one per cent.

When we consider the seriousness of conditions for which this operation is done, and the difficult character of the operation itself, it is evident that these results represent one of the greatest triumphs of modern surgery.

Dr. Charles Mayo has made a special study recently of the various forms of goitre and with possibly one exception has had a larger experience with these cases than any other surgeon in this country or Europe.

In exophthalmic goitre, the form in which there is much systemic disturbance, with rapid heart and protruding eyeballs, surgery is effecting many cures where medicine failed. It is again most cheering to know that in a series of 200 cases, including many of the more serious

form, operated on this year, the mortality has been only one and one-half per cent.

The giving of an anæsthetic is a far more important part of an operation than is sometimes supposed. Great advance has been made in this as in other departments of surgery, and the so-called "stage of excitement," when the patient was partly anæsthetized, during which, if he happened to be a muscular man, he was expected to make things decidedly lively for all about him, is fortunately a thing of the past.

It is interesting to know that the anæsthetists in St. Mary's Hospital are trained nurses. The one who has had the largest experience, Alice Magaw, reports 14,000 anæsthesias without a single fatality. This is a record of which she may well be proud. The time is near at hand when every hospital will have its trained anæsthetists and it may be that this work will prove to be a new specialty for registered nurses, thus making still broader a field of work which is already crowded with opportunities for usefulness.

This is an age in which empirical and one-sided methods seem to flourish and in which there is evident a popular tendency to "swallow whole" the latest fad, whether medical or theological or theologico-medical (if I may be permitted to coin a word for the need of the hour), instead of obeying the apostolic injunction—"Prove all things, hold fast that which is good."

But it is an age, as well, of steady and most wonderful advance along the lines of scientific research and achievement, and nowhere else in this country is that fact more conclusively demonstrated than at St. Mary's Hospital.

HOW TO PREVENT TYPHOID FEVER

By CHARLOTTE MANDEVILLE PERRY, R.N.

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LIKE tuberculosis, typhoid fever has of late been made the subject of very special scientific study. It is a subject knowledge of which should be distributed as broadcast as the little germs which bacteriology has given us eyes to see lurking in the most unsuspected corners of our surroundings, even stalking forth in broad daylight on the persons of those who are active carriers of the disease. How many know that such persons bear these organisms about with them, not only in the mouth but on the hands "for months, even years?" The question is how we can join forces in stamping out the disease. This inquiry leads to an